

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

PC-01 OMB-01 CU-02 /066 W

----- 014604

R 192120Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9810

INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PE

SUBJECT: GOP ANNOUNCES JANUARY 1977 TERMINATION OF SIL OPERATIONS

REF: LIMA 2340

1. PRIME MINISTER FERNANDEZ MALDONADO ISSUED A RESOLUTION APRIL 15 DESIGNATING A COMMISSION COMPOSED OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM TEN MINISTRIES TO ARRANGE FOR THE TRANSFER OF PROGRAMS AND ASSETS OF THE SUMMER INSTITUTE OF LINGUISTICS (SIL) TO THE GOP BY JANUARY 2, 1977. THE MINISTERIAL RESOLUTION ALSO SET UP AN INTER-AGENCY INSPECTION COMMITTEE, HEADED BY A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE WAR MINISTRY, IN THE SIL'S MAIN WORK SITE OF YARINACocha. THE COMMITTEE'S TASK IS TO ASSURE THE "PROTECTION OF GOP INTERESTS AND A CONTINUANCE OF SERVICES PROVIDED TO JUNGLE NATIVE COMMUNITIES".

2. THE APRIL 15 MINISTERIAL RESOLUTION FOLLOWED AN APRIL 12 PRESS INTERVIEW BY DONALD LINDHOLM, DIRECTOR OF THE SIL YARINACocha CENTER, IN WHICH LINDHOLM BROKE THE STORY THAT THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION HAD DECIDED TO TERMINATE SIL OPERATIONS EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1977 (LIMA 2340). LINDHOLM WAS EXTENSIVELY QUOTED IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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A FRONT-PAGE EL COMERCIO ARTICLE APRIL 13, UNDER THE HEADLINE

"MEMBERS OF SIL WILL ABANDON COUNTRY AT END OF THIS YEAR".

3. FOLLOWING THE LINDHOLM DECLARATION, EUSTAQUIO MAYLLE ORTEGA, PRESIDENT OF THE GOP-ORGANIZED CAMPESINO CONFEDERATION (CNA), HERALDED THE "EXPULSION" WHICH HE SAID WAS CAUSED BY SIL'S "ESPIONAGE WORK IN THE SERVICE OF IMPERIALIST COUNTRIES". MAYLLE DECLARED THAT THE CNA SHOULD TAKE OVER SIL PROPERTIES IN ORDER TO "DEVISE A PURELY REVOLUTIONARY PLAN IN ZONES WHERE SIL HAS BEEN OPERATING". HOWEVER, THE APRIL 15 MINISTERIAL RESOLUTION DOES NOT MENTION ANY CNA ROLE AND PROVIDES FOR THE TRANSFER OF SIL PROPERTY TO THE STATE. CNA SPOKESMEN ALSO CALLED FOR SIL EXPULSION TO BE FOLLOWED BY ACTION AGAINST "THE SWISS MISSION, THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES AND OTHER (GROUPS) THAT CONTINUE THEIR WORK AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL".

4. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THE EDUCATION MINISTRY HAD NOTIFIED SIL IN MARCH OF THE JANUARY 1977 TERMINATION DATE, THERE WAS SOME FEELING THAT THE RECENT GOP POLITICAL SHIFT MIGHT AID THE SIL IN AN EFFORT TO STRETCH OUT THE TRANSFER PERIOD. THE FACT THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO PUBLICITY ON THE GOP DECISION NOT TO RENEW SIL CONTRACT, WAS CONSIDERED A HOPEFUL SIGN WHICH COULD LEAD TO A POSTPONEMENT OF SIL DEPARTURE DATE. THE APRIL 12 PRESS INTERVIEW BY SIL'S YARINACocha DIRECTOR POSSIBLY AFFECTED THE TIMING OF THE SUBSEQUENT MINISTERIAL RESOLUTION WHICH CONFIRMED THE JANUARY 1977 TRANSFER DATE. THE PRESS INTERVIEW WAS A DEPARTURE FROM SIL'S LOW PROFILE POLICY, AND LIMA SIL REPRESENTATIVE LAMBERT ANDERSON TOLD EMBOFF THAT HE WAS TOTALLY SURPRISED, AND SOMEWHAT DISMAYED, TO READ THE LINDHOLM INTERVIEW. ANDERSON SAID THAT THE MAJOR SIL GOAL NOW IS TO RETAIN USE OF SIL HOMES AT YARINACocha FOR THE USE OF MISSIONARIES WHO WILL CONTINUE TO WORK IN A PRIVATE CAPACITY AFTER TERMINATION OF THE FORMAL CONTRACT WITH THE GOP. HOWEVER, THE MINISTERIAL RESOLUTION DOES NOT SEEM TO PROVIDE FOR SIL'S RETENTION OF THESE ASSETS. ALTHOUGH NEWSPAPERS CARRIED ANTI-SIL STATEMENTS OF CAMPESINO REPRESENTATIVES, PRESS TREATMENT OF SIL DEPARTURE HAS BEEN FREE FROM THE IDEOLOGICAL AND ANTI-U.S. FLAVOR THAT WOULD HAVE CHARACTERIZED IT BEFORE RECENT CHANGE OF NEWSPAPER DIRECTORS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: EXPULSION, NATIONALIZATION, CHURCH SCHOOLS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 APR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976LIMA03588
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760149-0349
From: LIMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760447/aaaabocp.tel
Line Count: 99
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 LIMA 2340
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <19 JUL 2004 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <26 OCT 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GOP ANNOUNCES JANUARY 1977 TERMINATION OF SIL OPERATIONS
TAGS: PINT, SEDU, PE, US, SIL, SUMMER SCHOOL OF LINGUISTICS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006